Shakespeare's History Plays: "Richard II" to "Henry V"

Abstract
This anthology of contemporary criticism was written within the last 20 years, most within the last ten. It aims to problematize, rather than merely reflect, traditional methods and assumptions. The selection of essays cover Richard II, Henry IV (parts one and two), and Henry V. By representing some of the wide range of new theoretically-informed critical approaches, it offers the reader a genuine plurality of different critical and interpretative strategies - new historicism, feminism, deconstruction, marxism, linguistics, anthropology, social history, textual and bibliographical studies, and cultural-materialism.

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Other links
http://hdl.handle.net/2299/5897
Many of Shakespeare's plays are historical, but only certain plays are categorized as such. Plays like "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" are historical in setting but are more correctly classified as Shakespeare tragedies. The same is true for the Roman plays ("Julius Caesar," "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Coriolanus"), which are all based on historical sources. The Shakespeare histories dramatize the Hundred Years War with France, giving us the Henry Tetralogy, Richard II, Richard III and King John—many of which feature the same characters at different ages. In all his histories, indeed in all his plays, Shakespeare provides social commentary via his characters and plots. The history plays say more about Shakespeare's time than the medieval society in which they are set. William Shakespeare, the famous English playwright, wrote plays in many different genres. One area of particular use by Shakespeare was the period of English history leading up to his own day, specifically the Plantagenet and Tudor Dynasties. Richard II was first performed in 1595 and was considered a politically dangerous play at the time. The current monarch of Shakespeare's day, Elizabeth I, had come to power through a fight for succession and was considered by some unfit to rule. Ad. The Henry Era of the history plays is probably the best known. Henry IV, Part I and II follow the battles of King Henry IV after his supplanting of Richard II on the throne.